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Letters

C.I.A.: 'A Cure Worse Than the Disease'

To the Editor:

Like many other citizens, I have been shocked to the point of numbness by each succeeding wave of revelation of the legion of illegal and amoral acts of responsible Federal Government agencies and officials. These waves had never touched me in my person or in my work. Last Thursday's New York Times, however, struck home!

I suddenly learned that the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology, from which I and my colleagues successfully sought financial support for our research in the late 50's and early 60's, was set up and functioned as a conduit for C.I.A. funds to support research of interest to that agency.

I immediately went to my files to look at two of my publications, both of which appeared in the Quarterly Journal of Alcohol Studies, whose editorial offices were then at Yale University. The footnotes to the titles read, respectively, as follows: "The research was completed under a grant from the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology to the Butler Health Center, Providence, R.I." and "This research was completed under a grant from the Human Ecology Fund. The author wishes to acknowledge the encouragement of Mr. James L. Monroe, executive director of the fund..."

To be sure, there is no question in my mind that the work I and others accomplished in those days was research in which we were interested as individual scientists—i.e., the effects of LSD and their therapeutic implications in the case of schizophrenic



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disorders and environmental ("ecological") determinants of the effects of alcohol. Moreover, I can assure you that in the case of the Butler experiments with both drugs the dignity, the rights and the physical and psychological safety of the volunteer subjects were considered and protected as far as humanly possible. Finally, I can state that the research was accomplished in a professionally competent manner and the results were made publicly available.

I am not, therefore, speaking of the important issues that have been raised to date of the protection of subjects, of the uses to which research findings

are put, of the influence funding agencies might have on the direction of research or of the moral "appropriateness" of the research. All of these are of concern. Rather, I would draw your attention to an equally if not more significant, yet to date strangely unclarified issue:

I know that I (and I am convinced that Dr. Robert W. Hyde, then superintendent of the Butler Health Center, as well as my other colleagues) had no knowledge of the C.I.A. auspices and functions of the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology. In a word, this was a "black" operation—deceptive and intended to deceive—on the part of my Government and addressed to me as a citizen.

It is not enough for Senator Chafee to label the activities of the C.I.A. "abhorrent," or for Admiral Turner to vow to locate all those adversely affected by the experiments and to speak of "a moral obligation to these researchers and institutions to protect them from any unjustified embarrassment [sic]." Parenthetically the least that might be done practically is clearly to differentiate between "political intelligence" and "political operations." For the two to be combined in a single agency is surely akin to asking the proverbial rat to watch the cheese.

But the bottom line remains: The domestication of psychological warfare, especially of "black" operations, in the name of national security is a cure that is surely worse than the disease. As The Times editorial makes clear, the issue is "Control C.I.A., Not Behavior." But this control is not a technical matter. Rather it is a matter of national policy and the character structures of those involved. Both must be firmly and explicitly anchored in our values as a free, democratic society based on a government of laws, however inexpedient and "risky."

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